

# SKYWORDS

May 2021

## Chairman's Chat

**My name is Martin. I'm addicted to paragliding and I've been clean for a month.**

The pubs opened (outside) again on 12 April. On the same day the BHPA confirmed that it was OK (with sensible precautions) to fly XC in England. This all coincided with some of the best Spring conditions that I can remember; but I'll have to leave it to others to tell you how good it's been, because my personal circumstances have dictated that I haven't been out flying at all this month. I haven't even been out to the pub yet!

It's been a frustrating time for me. I hope that none of you have suffered to the same degree as I have, but it's something that we all have to deal with to a certain extent. We all have family commitments and most of you have to hold down a job of some description (some more flexible than others!). Even if you're retired you still have to deal with the shit that life throws at you. Sod's Law guarantees that any appointment such as a trip to the dentist, or to get the car fixed, will conflict with a classic XC day!

I was in isolation when the good XC conditions first started so I had plenty of time on my hands. Initially I tried to follow all your adventures in detail in an attempt to be part of it. The WhatsApp group pinged with excitement. The first flurry came between about 6pm and 8pm the night before. This coincided with people planning the following day based upon the latest forecast but before the deadline for submitting a CANP. The second flurry came the next morning between about 7.30am – 9.30am when pilots confirmed their intentions. Updates from the hill started at about 10am.

I've always found the WhatsApp group a little intrusive, especially when people drift off subject or post meaningless photos or lengthy videos. That said the majority are pretty good, and it does seem to have paid dividends when it comes to getting people to the right hill (and recovering certain 'lost and found' items). No doubt a bit giddy from your first XC for a while, a few of you forgot that we also have a Telegram group specifically for retrieves. If anyone is in any doubt about the club's policy on communications, please take a look at the website [here](#). Please try to keep anything other than flying plans and site reports on the forum.

I've never really used [Livetrack24](#) before, but I created an account, searched for successful flights, and tried to follow as many as I could. I quickly got disillusioned. Even when you have narrowed the number of pilots down to a few 'friends' it isn't easy to see who is doing what without lots of surfing around to separate a good flight from a short hop. A common problem is that people forget to turn their tracking off. I was a little concerned to see Neil P's

track take him right into the middle of Leeds on a day when the airport was active, until I realised that it was his drive home; and one of Ed's less impressive XCs involved several circuits of his back garden!

In the end I concluded that trying to follow the flying in real time just added to my frustration and was too time consuming. Even in isolation I had better things to do: jet wash the patio; re-point all the mortar that I had just dislodged; wash both cars inside and out; clean my bike; cut the grass; etc. Now, when I'm not flying, I try to ignore individual posts on WhatsApp, catching up in blocks when it suits me. I don't bother with Livetrack24 anymore.

Unfortunately, the XC League had been down for much of the period (because XC wasn't allowed throughout the UK – it restarted on 16 Apr) but I noticed that a number of you have been recording your flights on [XC Contest](#) instead. I do quite enjoy catching up on the forum (again when it suits me). The [flight log](#) has been surprisingly quiet but I suspect that is because to date everyone (well Tam anyway) is still out flying and hasn't had chance to record their exploits yet. Or perhaps you're saving your articles for Skywords. Don't forget that the only source of interesting articles and write ups is YOU.

At one stage I tried to look at the positives of NOT flying. No need to pore over various weather forecasts. None of the stress in deciding where to go, no wasted journeys, no wasted fuel and no cold hands. None of it worked: I'm itching to get back into the air.

Fly safely,

**Martin Baxter**  
**Chairman**

# Dodd - 12<sup>th</sup> April

Arrived at Dodd and it was cold and crisp as expected, a few pilots were rigging and it felt light, perhaps too light. Took off nice and early, over the wall a couple of S turns then climbed straight up and out with Jake and Rob. To go or not to go? Well it was still early, I don't think we were properly established, there was a big blue hole behind us and two of the team were still on take off. So we hung around for a bit nice and high settling in and probably left in the third climb together, the group was Jake, Rob, Pete and Chris. Joseph was a wee bit lower than us and just not quite with us but I was hoping he was going to make the junction. I love climbing with friends all in the same thermal, close together, after all this time it's still a right old giggle.



Jake and Pete went off on a line towards the forest at Raydale over the back of Wether, Chris and Rob topped up a bit more then went off and I minced around to see if anyone found anything then my climb picked up again to base at 5500 feet. I set off to follow Chris and Rob and while I was on my glide they sorted it out and found the next climb which I was able to connect with just above them. Meanwhile Jake and Pete had climbed out of the hole they were in and we were more or less all back together, but not for long. At this stage I could still see Joseph fighting to stay in the game drifting towards Buckden Pike.

Jake, Rob and I climbed out while Pete and Chris somehow didn't connect and they went back to find something. Jake and Rob then went off on a glide and I tried what worked in round one - topping up while they found the climb. That set the pattern for the rest of the flight for me, in front I could see

Jake and Rob glide, search and climb, while I was topping up and gliding a couple of km behind. Climb and glide, climb and glide, not catching up but not getting left behind. Pete and Chris on the radio were working well together behind me somewhere but we were all still pretty close.



Angram and Scar House reservoirs came and went, Gouthwaite and Pateley to my right hand side, the moors and their patterned tops working well, base was up to 6000 feet now.

Jake and Rob obviously got stuck a bit as I thought I was going to catch them but they climbed out and went off just as I arrived and then it was my turn to struggle for a bit and they got away and I never saw them again. I did get back up but that was the beginning of the end for me. With the A1 in sight I was down low and mincing about but with an eye on a good field. one 360 to check the wind and then I put it down in a grass field only to find out about 5m up that it was one metre high crop, oops bother...

Before I'd even packed up Alex who had been watching on live tracking came to pick me up, thanks man. We also grabbed Pete who had landed just down the road, Alex took us back the car we had dropped at Blubberhouses earlier in the day. We passed on the karma by diverting to Pateley on our way back to the Dales to pick up Ges Hey who we had seen on whatsapp.

So what worked and what didn't? Definitely getting to the right site nice and early helped, no stress watching others climb out as we were driving up, it was us that were leaving as everyone else was arriving.





**Team flying sort of worked**, although we weren't all together for long we were in sight of each other in a 2-1-2 formation and with radio comms it definitely helped. On that note when I was towing down at Rutland last week I noticed my speaker mic had died so I had binned it so for this flight I was pretty much receive only with the radio in my pocket!

The day worked and I must have made some good decisions about where to fly, the clouds etc. **Never really looked at ground sources until I got low late in the flight, each cloud worked until it didn't** work and I was down. In hindsight with the A1 looming maybe I should have realised that things were maybe different than the booming moors and I could have slowed down and been more conservative. I did hit a climb but didn't properly core it and pushed on, perhaps I should have persevered?

To be fair I was knackered. It's been a long time since I've flown that long, that far, with that many circles and I was feeling it. Need to build up the stamina for the long flights.

**Funny game XC flying, I don't think I did anything different to the last three times I've been over the back and bombed at 10 km out, it's just that this time everything pretty much came off.**

Livetracking worked too, best retrieve ever just because someone just happened to be watching us while they were working from home.

Nearly back home and I get the call from Chris, he's made the bridge to Jake and Rob and together they had landed at Market Rasen - ladies and gentlemen 100 of your english miles! What a day. Cubs with the little girl then I picked Jake and Chris up from Wakey train station to go back to find Chris' car at Blubberhouses, from there it was home for me while they went back to Dodd for Jake's car. It was a late one all round but no one was complaining.

Note for Ed: the Nerv isn't too bulky in the bag, a bit bigger than my last lid but it's ok. Mine arrived with the visor separate and it's a two minute job to attach it with a couple of screw fixings. You could take it off again but I think it's designed to be on or off but not swapped often, a bit of a hassle. I have the standard sun (smoke? is it) visor, but Richard Meek swears by his orange tint one, not for me but each to his own.



*Slim Jim*

### **From Pete's point of view:**

Last minute day off.

Thought it was going to be light at the start but there was a good breeze and abundant lift on take off. Departed with Jake, Robin C, Chris F, Jim G and Joseph.

It was very NW so cross winding to stay on the high ground and out of the valley - a very necky first glide saw me arriving low at Raydale. Having got away with that one, I then played it more cautiously, but Chris and I missed the climb at Buckden pike and spent a fair while searching and lost contact with the others.

More cross winding around the head of Nidderdale, always spectacular, and then things looked to be good with the hard work done and great streets out into the Vale of York. We started speeding up, well Chris dragging me that is. However, north of Harrogate, Chris and I were heading for different bits of the same cloud and were maybe 1km apart when he connected. I booted it over but can't zip around the sky like the zeno boys and got drilled in the process. I arrived at the climb just over a minute later and 250m lower than him and could not make effective use of it only gaining 150m. Either I did not centre well enough, or perhaps unluckily it had fizzled out, or both?

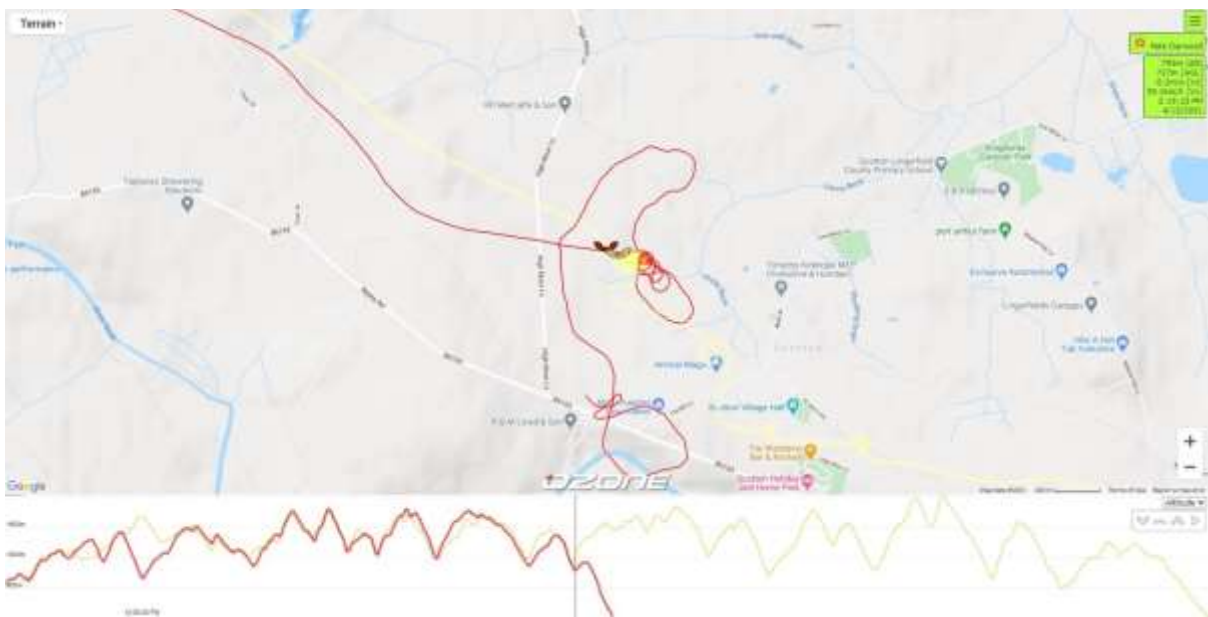
Chris was at this stage still climbing above me and I had about 850m AGL in the bag. There was big sink around and the next couple of kms downwind were shaded, so I started searching. At that point another glider appeared below me and the combination of searching, sink and watching another wing meant I basically got fixated, and as Jim later put it, "thermalled into the ground". The field I landed in was less than 500m from where I started the climb and was one I have landed in back in July 2018.

Jim had landed just up the road it turned out and Alex C very kindly took an extended tea break to pick us up and drop us back at a vehicle we had left in Blubberhouses.

Chris, once loosing his millstone, managed to boot it under the cloud street and catch up with Jake and Robin and get to Market Rasen - fantastic effort.

For me a bit more of a mixed day, with good bits, great company, stunning views, but also some poor decision making. I think <10 XC flights in 2020 is likely to be the main culprit.

Hopefully this tale will act as a cautionary note for others (my track in red, Chris' in yellow)!



***Pete Darwood***

# It's not all about the numbers

With the virus on the retreat – free-flying is back!

Travelling to flying sites has only been permitted since 29th March, but subsequently we have had, what can only be described as, a super April. The north of England has once again benefited from some great early season conditions, with great cloudbases and epic flights have been banged out all over the place.

As usual the UK XC league has been behind the times, but finally started again on the 16th April. In order to encourage local area flights, the “Tesco” multipliers for closed-circuit flights have been increased for 2021, so expect to see the top spots in the league dominated by triangles.

- Out and Return (15km): Up from 1.3 to **1.5**
- Out and Return (35km): Up from 1.7 to **2.0**
- Out and Return (Declared): Up from 2.0 to **2.3**
  
- Flat Triangle (15km): Up from 1.3 to **1.5**
- Flat Triangle (35km): Up from 1.7 to **2.0**
  
- FAI Triangle (15km): Up from 1.7 to **2.0**
- FAI Triangle (25km): Up from 2.0 to **2.3**
- FAI Triangle (Declared): Up from 2.7 to **3.0**

However, for mere mortals the league is a great place for intermediate and progressing pilots to record and measure their achievements and progress, as well as advertising the strength and depth of DHPC. The club has paid up for the season so pilots can freely enter the club league and of course the much-coveted XC mugs as well as prizes and awards are all determined from the flights entered. Your top six flights over the season count.

For those pilots that got the jump on the XC league, then many are also choosing to record their flights on XContest UK (<https://www.xcontest.org/united-kingdom/>). This is a great platform that is more user friendly than the XC league, for instance allowing automatic flight uploads, and more tolerant to igc format issues etc. With the inclusion of a UK league this year, it may well play an increasing role in the future, so sign up to this as well, and register yourselves as part of the DHPC so we can see how well the club places at the end of the season.

So, back to super April ... astonishingly at the top of the national XC league Idris Birch already has six flights in two weeks since the league opened, with nearly 1000 points accumulated. Locally, things started big on the 12th April when Chris Fountain, Jake Herbert and Robin Cruikshank all flew to Market Rason in Lincolnshire from Dodd Fell – a whopping 170km. Although not as long, there were of course loads of other cracking flights that day from the Dales. A couple of days later, with Leeds Bradford airspace closed, Jake and crew got to Otley from Model Ridge. Then on the 15th, Pete Logan and Richard Meek pulled off an epic flight across the Dales and Lakes, to land at Threlkeld from Whernside – if



like me then flying over interesting terrain and lines is your bag then this is one to make you jealous!

The XC league opened on Friday 16th April and 53 flights were entered that day alone. Top of the pick was the first 200km flight in Scotland, from just east of Loch Lommond to the north east coast at Macduff. Many Dales pilots had a day out in the Lakes, with Alex Colbeck completing a 63km triangle from Jenkin and several others flying round Derwent water then binning their triangle attempts to fly out into the Eden valley under great clouds, landing at Sedburgh, Tebay, and Kirkby Stephen amongst other places.

The Saturday proved even better, if you could stomach the conditions, with epic flights all around the country. In the Lakes 6.8m/s climbs over Skiddaw averaged over 20 seconds saw many come into land early for a respite, but Richard pulled off a 75km triangle despite having a proper SIV en-route – once you have seen his video of the event, with the wing fully rosetted behind him, followed by a massive cravat and auto-rotation, you'll appreciate it even more! However, **flight of the day for Dales pilots undoubtedly belongs to Chris Kay who managed a very rare completion of the Dales Three Peaks challenge.** Taking off from Whernside, he managed to round the trig points of Ingleborough and Pen-y-Ghent before coming back to do the same on Whernside and then cruising off to land at the edge of the Forest of Bowland – chapeau Chris!

More flying the following week with the weekend once again providing the pinnacle of conditions – why does that not happen all the time? Big flights in Scotland and the Lakes once again, but of more interest locally is Alex and Pete Logan landing on Blackpool beach from Ingleborough (**Editor:** See Later). Although I am informed they did not have the height for a circuit of the tower, unlike Dave Smart a few years back! Speaking of which, Dave took off from Model Ridge on Sunday and flew right across the Dales to land at Lancaster.

So super April is coming to a close, time of magnificent May? Get signed up for the leagues, get out and fly, but importantly enjoy yourselves – at the end of the day its not about the points!

***Pete Darwood***

# Nuisance Flying

For those taking advantage of our reciprocal rights to fly at Saltburn and Marske please take note, the following email was sent to all NYSC members. It is also a useful reminder of how important it is to avoid being a nuisance to the general public. Dales' sites are not heavily populated, but many are close to public rights of way. Whilst soaring aircraft are exempt from the 500' rule, it's worth noting the following extract from the Civil Aviation Act 1982. If a pilot were to be sued for damages it would be up to the civil court to decide what was 'reasonable'.

## Liability of aircraft in respect of trespass, nuisance and surface damage

No action shall lie in respect of trespass or in respect of nuisance, by reason only of the flight of an aircraft over any property at a height above the ground which, having regard to wind, weather and all the circumstances of the case is **reasonable**, or the ordinary incidents of such flight, so long as the provisions of any Air Navigation Order and of any orders under section 62 above have been duly complied with.

***Martin Baxter***

**From:** North Yorks Sailwing Club All Members <mailer.nysc@membermojo.co.uk>

**Sent:** 27 April 2021 22:44

**Subject:** Flying at the coast

Dear NYSC member,

With the recent string of north-easterlies there have been quite a few opportunities for flying at the coast and unfortunately there have apparently been a few instances where members of the public and/or their dogs have been startled by low flying paragliders. We have had a complaint from one member of the public, via the BHPA, that a low flying paraglider over Saltburn promenade startled his dog that then slipped its lead and was lost for several hours. Fortunately it was found OK but this has heightened the awareness and sensitivity of flying at populated areas like Saltburn.

Can I remind everybody to try, if at all possible, to avoid flying low over the Saltburn promenade and popular areas of the Marske dunes and if challenged by a member of the public please remain calm and polite. We do not want to allow this to become an issue which could jeopardise the sites.

Many thanks and fly safe.

***Jonathan Greenwood and the NYSC committee.***

# In't it Grand When Yer Daft!

Park Fell to Blackpool - April 2021 with Alex

A day when some things went wrong but that meant the day came so right in the end.

The error - someone decided that we should go to Kettlewell on the Saturday morning. For my part in that decision, I'm sorry. It resulted in a two big walk up day which is good for the soul but not necessarily the morale. At the top of Kettlewell things were decidedly off to the north and a little bit too strong. A group of seven of us mulled it over with a pie and decided that we'd head for the better reports of conditions in the western Dales. Que, walk back down and pleasant drive over to Stainforth heading for Ribbleshead, where we could walk up to Park Fell.

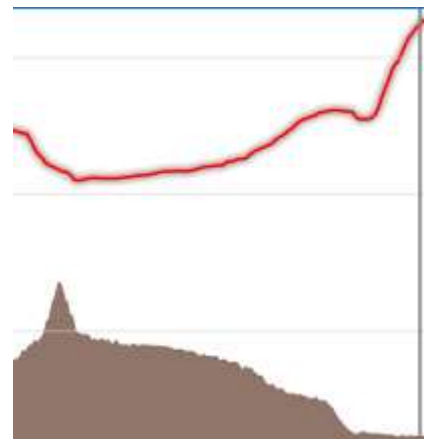
It's a reasonably brutal walk up but 30 minutes puts most of it behind you. It strung us out so Tam, Pete & Rosie, Charles, Harry, Alex and I arrived at TO strung out to find it blowing hard up the hill but not impossibly so. Alex and I unpacked the quickest keen to make the most of an obviously XC capable day from the late start.



A word about Park Fell. It's our own version of Parlick but points north. East and west faces are big but the north face probably bisects the wind a bit. Which can be a good trigger though. It's a big, steep walk up to the top after the flat walk in from Ribbleshead station. Seemed fine in a NE.

I'd hardly had time to settle into flying when we got the climb out. Alex made a second push forward and I saw the characteristic pause and hang back of his wing before it bit into the climb as he contacted proper lift. Then I was over there like a shot. **Worth noting that this was well out in front of the soaring part of Park Fell.** I don't know if this is the usual MO of thermals there but it worked well, taking us high over TO at 2.5 up.

We played in the whispies before deciding that the next obvious place to head was south, down the Ingleborough ridge line. We were out of sequence though for the lift coming off the top. The cloud was dying as we descended down to the peak. **This could be going wrong at any minute and so soon into the flight would have been plenty annoying.** There were a couple of gliders around, I remember, one had been high and was now below ridge height which acted as a warning to me. This was still an inverted day so we were going to have to work at staying high.



Both of us centred on some weak buoyancy that was coming off the western limestone pavement (maybe Whitescar). A lee side dribble. I'm quite happy mincing around in this stuff but it's not Alex's cup of tea, which is not to say he's bad at it. Quite the opposite.

Edging us closer to the deep aggregate quarry and Ingleton, the mincing was actually doing us good. It's always important to keep high on descending ground and that's what our patience in this air was allowing. Just haring off looking for the next big climb would have put us in plenty of sinking air. That patience paid off as we were rewarded with a strong climb to base above Ingleton.



*This shot is definitely not one where we're climbing in a thermal over Ed Cleasby's house...*

The flight section over the valley to Bentham was fast and mainly at base with some dark cloud forming. **It's all very much easier when you're above the inversion.** We had time to discuss some navigation. Over Bowland was obvious and the more we could stay inland, the better. Oddly enough though the clouds were stronger to our right i.e. the lower ground heading to the Lune valley and eventually the coast.



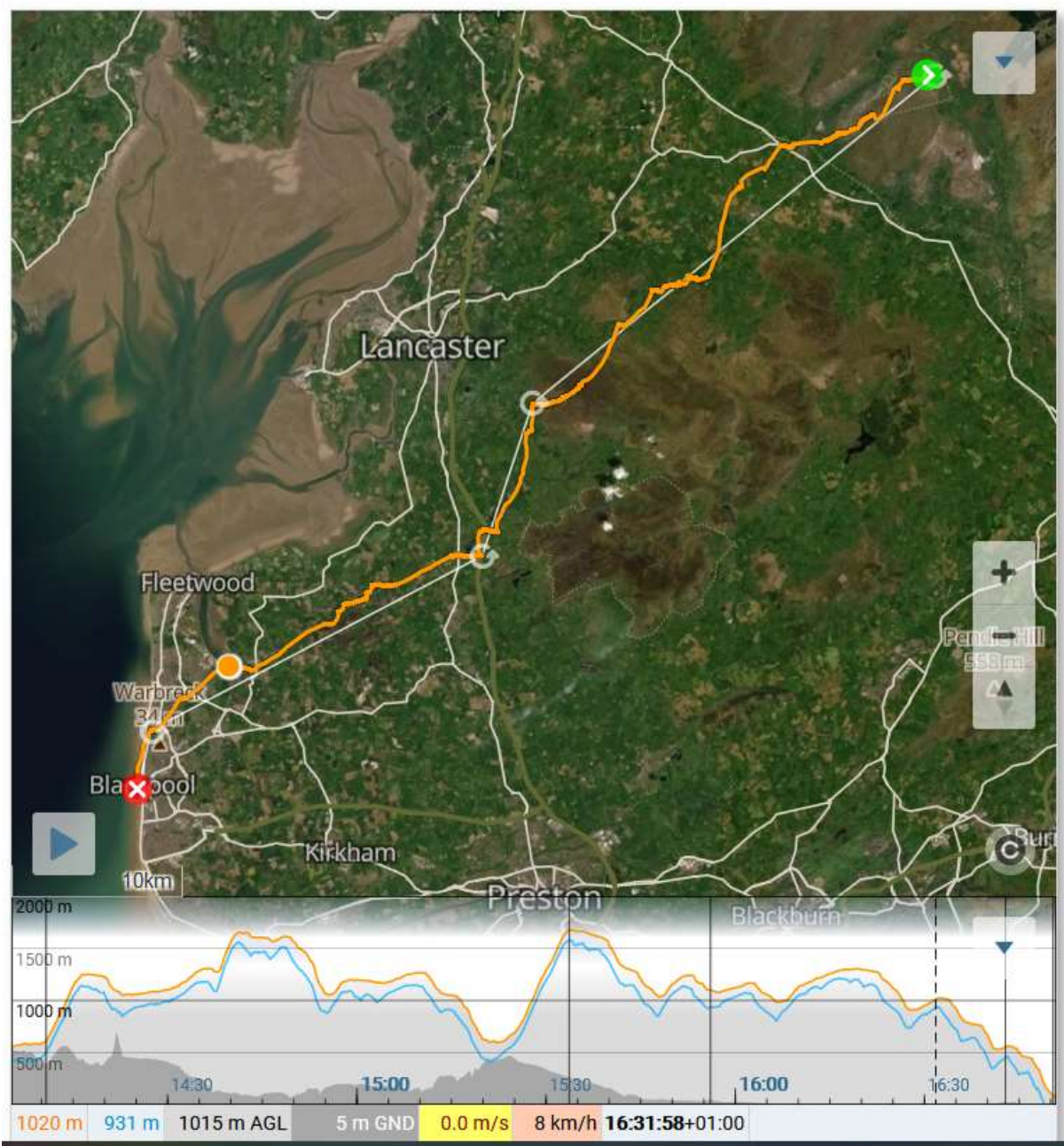
*Things going well on the way to Bentham.*



We'd make that decision when we actually got there though as we pushed into the rising ground of Bowland, confident we'd be booted back to base. It didn't quite happen that way leading to some head scratching as the ground came up to meet us. The situation was turning out to be the third in the series of going wrong. Isn't rising ground, into wind supposed to work better than this?

I found myself within a hundred metres or so of ground at Grit Fell. Its fairly anonymous and lonely as a place to land out. Alex a little higher had some more options but I was on the last throw of the dice. There had to be something coming up the slope or my flight was over.

Desperate times call for hanging on tight. I call this survival mode and it's one of the joys of XC flying. Most definitely it doesn't always work out but when it does, you know that the concentration has paid off. All the attention to the feel of the wing, the scanning for wind sign and birds has got you out of the hole you were in.



Now back at base we had time for some thought on the next move. Going directly south would be cross winding into a blue hole. It looked okay by the time you'd get to Parlick but we had much better cloud nearby over Scorton lakes and the M6. Alex came over on the radio saying he was much more comfortable that we were near civilisation. My retort was: **"You call Preston civilisation?" and I'm a Lancastrian by birth!**



Nearing the M6 we pushed into the flats over fishing lakes with Morcombe Bay and the Fylde coast slowly becoming more distinct in the haze. Alex's instincts paid off in flying over to a bump still east of the M6. We were at inversion height again and it provided enough buoyancy to keep us at height. The wind drift was now entirely easterly which took care of us heading to the into the Fylde. One of the few expanses of truly flat land flying in the North.

The sky was hazy and blue and there didn't seem to be much chance of making our half joking goal of Blackpool Tower, but we pushed on into The Great Wide Open. And here's where our earlier difficulties and delays actually worked out. We'd timed it right in the end. An inverted day just needs time to develop.

Clouds formed as we minced on. Always tempting but never hoovering us back to base. Pete on the radio having a difficult time of it in the Trough of Bowland. We adjusted a little to make sure we were comfortably south of the Cockerham drop zone. Alex had spotted parachutes so we knew it was live, I'd managed to miss them.

I'll let the photos do the talking for the next 10km or so....



*Looking West, Fleetwood, Bispham and Blackpool are there somewhere.*



*Mincy, mincy, flyer. Learns to chillout.*





*South along the M6 to Garstang and an indication of the inversion we were cheating.*



*Crossing the River Wyre and we get a small climb and we know the goal is in the bag :-)*





*Fields and Bispham Golf Course mark our route in as safe bomb out fields.*



*And suddenly goal is in the bag.*



*Mad. You start on moorland, hang under string for 2 hours or so and end up here.*



*Cruising home, although there were rough climbs going out to sea that we had to negotiate.*





*Landing spot identified!*



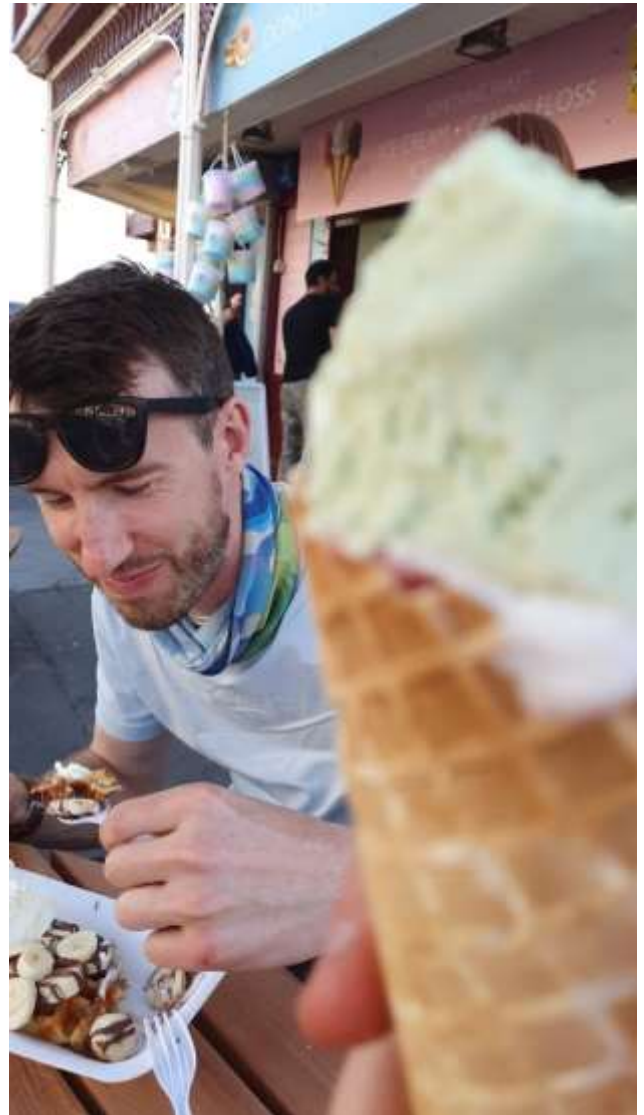
No way were we going to pack our wings on the beach so we braved the comments from people on the prom instead..... “Where’s the plane?” many times.... And this peach: “**How long did it take you?**”... Me: “**Three hours.**” ... “**Didn’t you get bored?**”

When you get to Blackpool, you’ve earned your chips and ice cream...



Needless to say smiles all round as we got packed and laughed at the bizarreness of landing in the middle of the mayhem of Blackpool Front.

Pete Darwood managed to sneak onto the north Fylde coast and Rosie was pretty near Kendal.



A huge thanks go to Tam who arrived in the car not much more than an hour after we landed, making the retrieve as pleasant as the flight.

**Pete Logan**

*Blackpool Promenade*



# Please stay safe...

The last 3 weeks have been the most incident ridden I have seen in my lifetime.

Even us old hands are inexperienced right now. A few good flights under our belts does not change that just yet, and I think a lot of other people are underestimating the risks too.



So whilst no one has been injured or killed amongst us, too many things have gone wrong recently and it's perhaps just luck that hasn't happened. Here's some examples I've seen from the last 3 weeks:

## Pilot A

On a site where it's windy, gusty and wind is more than 45 degrees off the slope. It's boulder strewn. They take off, crab along and go up, eventually getting well above the height of the ridge. Ok, it worked, but IMO a that was too much of a roll of the dice. If we all begin to ridge

soar with the wind off like this we'll have a ton of accidents. Way more mechanical turbulence. Limited lift. Way more groundspeed one way. This is just asking for trouble.

#### Pilot B

Thermic day, limited lift and hard to stay up. Little wind but the pilot is clinging to the ridge soaring along. Hits a sinky bit. No time to turn out or get legs out of the pod, bounces on heather, just missing a rock. All OK thankfully. Observations - Firstly the pilots who got up were well away from the hill, so no benefit to sticking right in. Secondly, not enough margin for error. You should always be ready to turn out, and have your legs out of the pod in case.

#### Pilot C

Took a large collapse on a thermic day, just a bit too relaxed about it really... Taking regular collapses indicates poor pitch control. Whilst on rough days some tip collapses are inevitable but if you get regular (Like more than once every 50 hours) collapses you aren't fully in control of your glider. Perhaps the glider is out of trim but more likely you are not catching the dives sufficiently to stop the collapse occurring and then progressing.

#### Pilot D

Very strong day, hit strong lift whilst accelerated, the recovery from front collapse leads to cravat and cascade. Pilot patiently extracts themselves from this situation without needing reserve but it takes 30 seconds to fully come out and stop the rotation. Lucky to have occurred at 5000ft !

#### Pilot E

Thermic day on a mountain site. Out of thermic cycle, the pilot scratches on mountain side. Hits a bullet climb, wing pitches back then dives, collapses and then goes parachutal. Pilot hit the ground. Thankfully no major injury. Pilot then flies again - Should really have called it a day at that point.

#### Pilot F

Does pre-flight checks, rushing as keen to get in the air quickly as their mates are already getting away. Misses massive knot in brake cascade, and cannot seem to launch. Then realises why and sorts knot out. If they'd have launched the glider it would have been hard to control and likely to stall / spin, probably with a bad outcome.

#### Pilot G

Site with light winds and thermals. Pilot is in light lift and does a 360 close to the hill, misjudging where ground is. They hit the ground before making it round, bounces and is OK.

#### Pilot H

Not flown much for a long time. Goes to thermic site. Has major cascade event losing lots of height. Flying EN D Glider. Possibly out of trim? But maybe just not exhibiting the recovery skills an EN D pilot should possess right now.

#### Pilot I

Took off with a twist in the riser. Not an immediate emergency but shows a lack of preparation, probably rushing to get in the air. This led to a bottom landing in bracken which clogged the lines up with vegetation which led to a knotted set of lines. Being slow and deliberate at the start would have overall saved time and effort.

#### Pilots X, Y, Z

Weather conditions look really poor. e.g. approaching rain, hail, gust front etc. Pilots still flying! Pilots getting too close and personal with clouds.

You may know who some of these people are. The intention isn't to shame anyone or embarrass them. **It's just too many of us, and happened too much too quickly.** And this is just what I've seen. I'm not innocent either. I'm in there too, and I doubt we'll see a single accident / incident report.

It seems that we have a culture of pilots embarrassed to admit they are making mistakes. Goldfish memory has its place sometimes I suppose. Pilots unaware how rusty they are. Pilots over keen to take risks because of trying to get points, or get respect from their peers or make the most out of a day.

We are/should be in this for the long haul. If we carry on like this someone is going to get seriously hurt. I know we can't do this 100% safely. But if we just shrug when something dodgy happens and don't challenge our own and others behaviours then we are much more likely to get hurt.

I really don't want to see any of us get hurt.

In some of the instances above, I've discussed the incident with the pilot and they are wanting to think about it critically. In others I get the feeling they'd rather we just forgot about it, or I haven't had a chance to ask them about it.

Writing this I know I'll hurt some egos and ruffle some feathers but I'd rather that, than staying silent and then waiting for the inevitable.

I realise no one made me safety officer. But I'd like us all to be safety officers to some degree. If anyone wants me to just butt out on talking about safety with them then please let me know and I'll do that. And I invite anyone to point out real or perceived issues they see with my own flying too. I think it's great that the Dales pilots are getting great results. We have one of the strongest set of XC pilots in the country. But we need to do it safely.

What can we do then? Some suggestions....

- Make sure our **kit is in top condition**. Trim checked. Reserve repacked. Any niggles sorted.
- **Pre flight properly**. We can start earlier and have more time before take off.
- **Critically assess take off conditions**. Flyable doesn't mean acceptable safe.
- **Stay away from the ground**. More margin required. Landing gear out when scratching.
- **Respect our wings**. Some of us are on very hot wings. They demand exact piloting. Keep in control after TO, don't let go of brakes. Catch the dive. Training. Thinking.
- We can either be pilots that always take off when it's possible. Or we can be **pilots that have criteria for what is safe take off conditions**. Which type of pilot do you want to be?
- **Recognise the red mist**. Yes we want to perform. But not at risk of injury. There will be other days. Slow down and allow ourselves to walk away from situations.

Like it or not, we are setting some kind of example for each other, and for the people up and coming, to a large extent this sets the culture within the club and therefore the safety of everyone. We all have a responsibility here.

We define what normal is. Part of the reason for writing this is selfish. I want my own definition of normal to be recalibrated away from overly sketchy behaviour.

We need to think about and discuss safety and not sweep incidents under the carpet. OK rant over. Love you all!

**Jake Herbert**

# Coaching

Call out to anyone looking to become a club coach or any existing club coaches feeling the need to refresh. I'll be organising a club coaching course somewhere in the Dales, near a pub (and definitely with un-flyable weather of course!). It'll be the weekend of the 12th & 13th February.

I'll be inviting other clubs too so it's an opportunity to get to know a few folks from around us and make some more contacts. The course itself is two days and is pretty interactive with the BHPA technical officers. You'll learn a lot for your own flying, as well as for others.

Contact me at [coaching@dhpc.org.uk](mailto:coaching@dhpc.org.uk) to take part.

For our existing coaches, the BHPA advise the following - basically refresh every five years.

In recent years the BHPA has made several major improvements to the way it ensures that Instructors and certain other licence holders are fully current.

One of these improvements made by the Flying and Safety Committee (FSC) is the introduction of a coach revalidation system to ensure that all licensed Club Coaches and Senior Coaches are fully current and active. This should minimise the chances of any accidents occurring during coaching activity, and it should also help minimise the legal exposure of any coach if the worst came to the worst.

The BHPA coach revalidation system simply requires all Club Coaches and Senior Coaches to have a declaration of support signed by the Club's Chief Coach at membership renewal time. e.g. As the licence holder's Chief Coach, I can confirm that he/she continues to be a valuable active member of the club's coaching team.

In the unlikely event of the club having no nominated Chief Coach, the club Chairman should sign this declaration.

The FSC also recommends that coaches should re-attend the Coach Course at least every five years to ensure that nothing gets forgotten and that they are fully up-to-date with current thinking. The club coach course fee is currently £30 per participant, but this is reduced to £20 for a retake.

An additional box has also been added to BHPA membership renewal forms for current coach licence holders. This box can be ticked if the member no longer wishes hold a Coach Licence.

**Pete Logan**  
**Chief Coach**



# Other Notable flights

(from the Forum's Flight Log thread –read more [here](#))

**30<sup>th</sup> March**  
**Windbank**  
**Ed Cleasby**

Surprisingly light winds compared to forecast and a decent number of pilots out and spread out down the ridge.

Many thanks to Stef who updated us on wind speed and triggered a quick reshuffle of my day to allow an early exit to the Dales. Simple comms from the hill are so valuable!

I climbed to the top and saw someone take off as I got there. It felt a bit fresh and looked a little challenging so I opted to go down the front a little and take off in the lower winds there. Got myself sorted and took off into a nice cycle that quickly had me over takeoff and making my way down the ridge.

Quite a hazy and inverted day with not much height to be gained. Thermals were plentiful but were difficult to make much use of. Some were a bit rowdy especially around Arncliffe where there was the occasional tip collapse etc, nothing too scary but certainly enough to keep you entertained.

I tried to get photos of people but they've not come out brilliantly but hopefully you might be able to see yourself in one

<https://gopro.com/v/7amB2qBWpqa63>

Nice to see others out and looking forward to more of the same

Last Image: **3M and Cotterside.**

Two sites in a day! Always a bit on light side but direction was more the problem



*Littondale*



*Upper Wharfedale*



**31<sup>st</sup> March**  
**Great Whernside**  
**Joseph Edmonds**

Forecast was for very light winds and so it was always going to be a bit of a hit and miss day. I took my MTB as well which turned out to be an excellent choice

Decided to go to Great Whernside - largely because it looked as good as anywhere, its a nice high hill so has a chance of getting the best of any breeze and it is one of my closest sites physically.

On the climb up other pilots arrived at the bottom and so it was clear there were going to be a few of us - not a problem as it's a massive site.

On the top there was a definite breeze and it was bang on the hill, but it just wasn't at anything like ridge soarable strength and so you had to take off into cycles. It was possible to stay up at least for a bit and some pilots did a lot better than others. I managed multiple short flights and did a whole load of ground handling which was challenging and entertaining in the switchy thermic conditions.

Eventually Jake flew out towards the landing and I decided to follow shortly afterwards. My vario had actually gone to sleep which was a shame as I seemed to connect with lift quite quickly. I managed to get it turned on and take a climb back up to takeoff height however it seemed to fizzle out at this height - perhaps explaining why we were struggling on the hill?

It extended my top to bottom though and was my first proper, nicely centered thermal climb of the year. Another thing ticked off the rustiness list.

I opted to go to Gisburn Forest and ride the red route in the afternoon. I took **the scenic drive up littondale and over the tops past Malham - one of the nicest drives in the Dales**. Lovely way to make the most of the day off.

**3rd April**  
**Addingham**  
**Pete Logan**

A bit of a rush to get to Addingham. I needn't have bothered since, as I walked up with Chris, Dave and Jake in pursuit, it was clear that there was still plenty of wind in the day. We setup a little down from the bench TO thinking we could probably cope with the wind being off the hill.

With the wing up, the wind was pretty much coming along the slope so I GHed (is that a verb?) up the slope to where a take off was possible and ambled slowly passed the quarry, steadily gaining height. Round the corner a bit and the wind was better placed but still on the strong side. Not mad strong wind though. Penetration was still possible without bar.

There was a little sun but mainly flat clouds at about 3000ft. Surprisingly there were some punchy little climbs about but I could only afford to turn in them two or three times before going back forward to get more lift. In this way I rose to about 700m at around the mid point of the ridge.

I had a dual goal; either fly over to Ilkley Moor TO at the Cow and Calf and also to fly back home whilst the Leeds Bradford airspace is open (see NOTAMs for the opening dates and times). On the second attempt I saw a route out front of the ridge amongst the clouds and set off over Ilkley to get to the Cow and Calf. It was a bit sinky over the White Well but I made it with a few hundred metres in hand.

There was quite a crowd on Ilkley TO, probably the most it's seen ... maybe

ever? Chris, Jake and David had decamped there after seeing what I went through for a take off. With the lift dying a little I landed on top for a chat but kept the wing kiting. After a minute or so a little bubble came through and I was off again.

Several of us found a climb out in the sunny sky, releasing on the dark ground over the back. I got back to 3000ft and contemplated a flop over the back to reach home in Baildon. But I had my sensible head on it seems. I also had the height to fly back to Addingham and pickup my car which had been left there. So that's what I did, pushing on bar and getting back to the front of the ridge after the reservoir.

I closed the out and return, maybe I've got the cheek to upload it ;-), and added a few hundred metres on the other end to extend it a little bit before heading out to the car and spiralling down. Predictably, when I'd decided to land there was a boat load of lift about.

The car parked back at the Cow and Calf I walked up to find the wind had pretty much died off but had a great catch up with faces I've only seen on zoom calls for the last few months and a good chat with new members and hopefully some members to be.

### **3rd April Cow Close Fell Tam Skinner**

I headed to Cow Close in hope that it wouldnt be blown out. Several others also there eventually. Very strong sustained gusts on top kept everyone on the ground, hoping that the forecast of reducing speeds as the day progressed.

It was cold despite the glorious sunshine. About 2.30 Rahul lead the way into the air and found plenty of lift. about 8 or so followed. I was sorting a knot discovered as I inflated my wing. Whilst doing this, a sustained lull put many on the ground, and I launched with just Marek and Gez left in the air.

Marek showed that nice climbs were possible, and I eventually connected with a weak but relaxed and peaceful climb to 900ft ATO. Bliss! It switched off at this point and anyone left in the air landed.

A few TTB were had after this I think. Glorious day out, and great to see everyone. Hi res photos available if anyone wants a copy.



**9th April (also flown 7<sup>th</sup> April)  
Farleton  
Darren Goodlad**

Farleton – Not quite the 5-star day Rasp predicted.

I was watching the chatter on the various whatsapp groups with interest at work knowing I was going to finish early. The forecast was for 5-star thermals across the North but talk on the groups was full of “blown out” to “little wind” to “8/8 cloud cover” depending on location. I decided to head to Farleton for a play, my closest NW hill, I didn't fancy the drive out to Dodd or Wether to be disappointed. Given the chance it was going to be breezy I packed the winter wing, I fly 5kg over the official weight range, and the miniwing just in case.

Upon arrival a windsock was in the field and pilots were in the air, always a good sign! It looked like Tom H again on his lovely Air Design Soar, I might have been a little wing envious... I opted to take the normal wing up to TO. On the walk up I saw one full size wing connect with good lift and disappear over the back, closely followed by Tom but another lose out and push out to land. It's going to be one of those days...

At TO I met up with Danny rigging up and two other pilots John (?) and Tim Rogers, nice to finally meet you Tim! I watched with interest as all 3 took off, unfortunately 1 went down while 2 slope landed. A couple of gusty launch attempts showed the nature of the day, off – on - off – on, frustrating. Very light cycles were coming through but nothing to excite. A waiting game was called. My biggest issue with paragliding is the waiting, drives me nuts and once again waiting got the better of me. The pilot who bottom landed had climbed back up for another pop and by that time I was bored so off I popped, straight into little lift but I was flying so happier. I pushed out front to explore potential triggers, some small bubbles over the trees at the river but only to tease never to satisfy. Time to land.

Farleton - Take two - Just my luck, once finished packing up and walking back I had the pleasure to watch 3 pilots take off and saw John connect with lift and head off over the back. I was beginning to regret not packing my better glider... back up for another try, be rude not too!

Back on top and a further two pilots had joined the fun, or lack thereof. Danny had gone down for landing but Tim (the persistent), had slope landed in hope of another crack. One flew off for a touch of soaring but soon enough went down to land too. I decided a rest and a brew was in order so Tim and I talked flying politics for a while in the sunshine waiting for a sign from the weather gods. Alas it wasn't to be and my lack of patience was making me itch, the wind had picked up a little so off I popped. Some initial good lift but purely dynamic and very narrow width. A last attempt at a ploughed field off to the south proved futile, I knew as much but ever optimistic, at least the landing was a slow elevator down.

The day may not have been 5 stars but once again I went home with a smile on my face, a couple of lessons learnt Any flying is worth the walk up the hill, looking forward to more!



**11th April**  
**Addingham Moorside**  
**Pete Darwood**

Forecast to overdevelop again and no car so a quick hike along to Addingham Moorside.

3-5cm of snow on the moor and hoovered pretty much from the start with buckets of lift around. Stayed clear of base although if I had not been alone and things were not forecast to go nuts I could have been tempted to use the opportunity of LBA being closed to go somewhere different.



Landed after an hour and a bit as it was bitterly cold high up and the snow had started falling on Embsay moor (arrived 30 minutes later so not a bad call). Could hear Rahul on Longridge?

**11th April**  
**Longridge**  
**Joseph Edmonds**

Had really low expectations for the day and had considered going to Addingham but was tempted by the will of the flying plans group to head to Longridge. It looked to be about the best place to be in terms of not too much wind and a decent chance of sunshine.

Arrived and met up with Tim and Ges, Richard Meek arrived around the same time as well but went straight to launch whereas we dawdled a bit not quite sure where to take off. We met up with Tam and Rahul who were set up and waiting on the shoulder but wind was looking very far off the hill. In the end Ges opted for the shoulder close to the parking whereas Tim and I decided to walk further on to the highest heathery ridge. The sight of two or three pilots death gliding to the foot of the heather covered slopes and also the fact that Richard and other pilots had opted to walk round encouraged us.

We saw Rahul take off and manage to connect with something on the shoulder and get high quickly which was encouraging, but other pilots were not so lucky.

Manage to find a grassy bit of the top ridge to set up and then took off and was quickly hoisted up. I enjoyed a couple of hours of climbing and then gliding through strong sink. Practicing my speedbar and trying to penetrate out into the valley. I was not able to make much progress really but manage to get nearly all the way to Chipping at one point before I bottled it and turned back for the ridge.

A rather ominously dark cloud and a squall of snow approached and I managed to avoid this by scooting up the ridge and finding some scrappy thermals over the golf course which allowed me to stay up and out of the snow - apparently it was quite painful to fly through.

In the end I ran out of bloodsugar. It would have been impossible to try to eat anything with my three pairs of gloves on, I need to have a think about that. The wind strength was increasing the air generally felt less benign. That combined with me starting to crash a bit encouraged me to quit whilst I was ahead and come in to land, just over 2 hours.

**11<sup>th</sup> April  
Park Fell  
Ed Cleasby**

My third  
consecutive day on  
Park.

Each day was quite  
different.

The order (from  
top) is 9th, 10th  
and 11th ....

you can see how  
the instability grew  
over those three  
days



**12<sup>th</sup> April**  
**Dodd Fell**  
**Various**

See earlier, more [here](#)

**15<sup>th</sup> April**  
**Whernside to Threlkeld**  
**Pete Logan**

The epic week just goes on and on.

Photos here:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/opBLoEjn5s4NuXj97>

**25<sup>th</sup> April**  
**Park Fell**  
**Tam Skinner**

At 10.30 - 11 at Ribbleshead, it was too northerly for Whernside and a fresh breeze. Quite a milky sky. About 4 different groups of pilots decided they would try Park Fell.

It was strong initially on Park (16mph+) - and gusts got stronger for a while. People started launching 1.30 ish I think. Good thermic lift, but those soaring sometimes bombing out in the lulls,



Sky cleared out and Cus arrived 3 ish as forecast, by which time I had bombed out at the extreme southern end of Whernside where the wind was whistling down the valley and it was quite rough. Lots got good flights were had and lots of air time, and still flying at 5 when I left.

Flights are on XCLeague and XContest. There was 1 wing in the air on Gragareth and at least a couple on launch at 3ish.

**A great day out.**



**25th April**  
**Old Man of Coniston**  
**Charles McDonald**

I woke at 6 with plans of a quick glance at the weather and a fast exit out the door towards the Old Man of Coniston, 2hours 40 minutes away.

As usually happens, I still did not get out as early as I wanted, but I did manage to get to the Coniston parking by 09H40 when about 5 spaces were still available. **Coniston parking has changed and now also has a parking meter charging 8 quid for the full day. You need to get there early if you hope to park.**

Having arrived early I decided to fit my new A line on my wing but discovered it was about 3 (or more) cm longer than my existing line. Since I don't know the loops to take that much off, I decided to fly with my damaged (sheathing) line and proceeded to climb the mountain.

Training certainly has paid off. I made it to the top in 90 minutes with much less pain than the previous time, which took me over 2 hours.

Given the wind was too strong on the shoulder and most pilots chose to launch lower down, I walked some way down the mountain. It seemed as though quite a few were not able to stay up and were landing near or at the bottom. Some climbed the mountain for a second attempt.

Launching was quite straight forward. A number of pilots were trying to bring their wings up near the edge, resulting in a lot of thrashing etc. I chose to bring my wing up further back in a nice grassy patch, and then to walk forward. Nice and easy.

**Initially I worked the ridge a while, taking a long time to get high.** There were thermals running up the ridge, and looking at other tracklogs people would launch and within minutes have hooked a thermal for a ride up. I was hesitant to hook a thermal so low down, always being afraid of falling out the back and hitting the mountain. Clearly some work required there.

I had programmed the [Coniston Cradle](#) which I had tried once before, and had bombed out pushing for turnpoint 2 with a death glide. This time I was determined to be much more conservative in my attempt, only proceeding when I was sure I had height, or turning around if I felt I was getting low. No death glides this time.

It took me about 20 minutes before I really got on the way. In that 20 minutes I never really hooked and remained in a thermal. Nerves probably got the best of me. I did find there were some fairly active ones and weirdly kept falling out of them. Mapping clearly something I need to work on. I thought I was better than this?? I put it down to early season rustiness...

Making tp1 and topping up to roughly 1100m, I worked all the way back along the ridge to above the trig beacon where I connected with a fabulous thermal, probably being fed from the quarry. (this was to be my comfort blanket and a point I kept running back to throughout the flight) After riding the elevator I started pushing towards tp2 in front of Coniston. This push was very conservative as I kept topping up in all the thermals I went through, of course drifting back as I did so.

It did mean I still had a comfortable 800m altitude when my buzzer indicated I had entered the cylinder. Throwing in a sharp left, I headed towards the ridge on the far side of the copper valley. Getting a nice spicy thermal there and a number more as I pushed towards tp3 ensured I had a comfortable 1200m in the bag as my buzzer sounded again.



Confidence, or perhaps overconfidence filled me at this point and I was certain I would be making goal.

**Of course, when brimming with a bucket full of altitude and a glow of overconfidence, you're sure to loose it all.** Heading back towards the ridge where I had previously got those grand thermals I sunk out, going through lifty patches but never really able to gain much height. Soon I was in the bowl and being tossed around a lot at about 500m. Concerned about rotor, I left the bowl and desperately started scratching some ridges.

Being the fabulous day it was, I eventually managed to work my way back up to the top of the Old Man and back to my safety blanket over the quarry. Given the slap down of my earlier overconfidence I was 26 minutes in this region before I felt I had enough altitude to push for tp4, with the edge of the cylinder over Coniston itself.

Hitting tp4 with 1000m still in the bag, I decided to push directly for tp5, reasoning that COM was downwind and if needed, I could bolt towards the mountain at any point I felt it necessary.

As luck would have it, as my buzzer for tp5 went off, I also connected with another thermal, eventually having enough height to push straight for tp6. At this point I felt I could easily make tp6 and then back to the goal cylinder without the need for further topping up and for the first time committed to a death glide.

As the case may be, I did once again return to my safety blanket where I topped up one final time before heading to goal. Yes! did it!

3 hours had passed and although the day was clearly still working I decided to burn off altitude and go land. Still had close on 3 hours drive home and I was now sated having achieved my goal.

Landing next to a few other pilots packing up, I saw Rosie D. The Sun (pub) was now on the cards. As I was leaving I heard my name being called. Ed had just landed and was enquiring about my route home. No ulterior motive... but I offered to take him back to his car in the Mallerstang valley. Clearly he had a good day as well :-)

Learnings:

- Spend less time pouring over the forecast and leave home early
- I need to focus more on my early thermalling. I could have hooked the many thermals and been on my way much sooner that I had
- Flying conservatively keeps me in the air.
- Having and achieving a goal feels good :-)

***Charles McDonald***